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ABSTRACT

A handbook is presented to assist Western Oregon State College faculty in identifying and understanding the problems and needs of international students and to help them welcome international students as positive influences in classes, on the campus, and in the community. Included is information on culture shock, transition problems of international students in the United States, culture and international student relationships, counseling the international student, Arabs and Pacific Islanders in U.S. postsecondary education, and instructional behaviors that facilitate international student learning. Specific topics include: international student/faculty relations at Western Oregon State College; American/Japanese communication behaviors; the value of silence in intercultural communication; how Americans view international students; problems encountered by East, West, and North African students; adjustment problems of Chinese, Indian, and other students; some common stereotypes of Americans held by foreigners; cultural biases that affect counseling the international student; and Japanese and Chinese language roadblocks to using English. (SW)

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UNDERSTANDING, ADVISING, AND TEACHING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:

A Handbook for Faculty

JAMES W. MOORE, Ph.D.
Western Oregon State College

HE 020 997

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ABSTRACT

Understanding, Advising, and Teaching International Students: A Handbook for Faculty, James W. Moore, Ph.D., Western Oregon State College, September 1987.

This handbook is designed to assist faculty in identifying and understanding the problems and needs of international students, and to help them welcome international students as positive influences in their classes, on the college campus, and in the community.

The handbook includes information on culture shock, transition problems of international students in the US, culture and international student relationships, counseling the international student, Pacific Islanders in US post-secondary education, and instructional behaviors which facilitate international student learning.

PREFACE

Who benefits from the involvement of international students on a college campus? Certainly the students, both international and U.S., benefit from the added intercultural dimension of the campus. The community benefits not only economically, but also from the cultural diversity which the international students and professors provide. Most of all, the institution benefits from the involvement and interchange international students demand of those who attempt to meet their needs. International students bring a unique and enriching perspective to the college campus and courses. Unfortunately, some professors tend to see this perspective as a potential problem instead of a potential resource. This handbook was written to help faculty to welcome international students as positive influences in their classes, on the college campus, and in the community.

International students can assist faculty and provide an international dimension to classes, conferences, and seminars by serving as facilitators, panelists, and resource people. They are our "resident experts" and are usually delighted to provide this kind of assistance. The community benefits from the cultural diversity the international students provide by attending such events as the annual International Night and by inviting them to speak to community groups, assist at local schools, and participate in cultural events.

When we speak of the people from other nations we have words in English to describe them-British, Japanese, French, for example. It seems awkward to describe citizens of the United States. What should we call them, USAers? In this handbook, although the term actually means anyone from North or South America, the term American will be used to signify citizens of the United States.

The funds to support the mechanics of this handbook- computer searches, lay-out, printing, and binding were provided by a Western Faculty Development award. The research and writing are my donation for the benefit of international students at Western Oregon State College.

James W. Moore
Monmouth, Oregon
September 1987

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Introduction

Senator J. William Fulbright once wrote, "the interchange of students and scholars across national boundaries is the most effective way to enable humankind to apply reason rather than arms to the arbitration of international problems." Within this context a faculty handbook to be used to increase understanding and improve communication between faculty and international students is relevant and timely.

The international student body at Western provides a very important opportunity to give significant groups of people from outside our borders not only academic benefits, but also a better understanding of American values, culture, and society. At the same time these students give us many opportunities to enrich our understanding of the values, culture, and social structure of their countries.

The international (foreign) student enrollment at Western has shown a marked increase since 1984. Western experienced a 22% increase between the 1985/1986 and 1986/1987 academic years; close on the heels of a 25% increase between 1984/85 and 1985/86. In September 1986 there were183 international students from 36 different nations enrolled at Western. During winter term 1987 eighteen additional international students enrolled. The largest groups come from the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Micronesia) and the Middle East. The largest single country group comes from the tiny nation of Kuwait. As of winter term 1987 the international student enrollment at Western was a little over six percent of the total student body.

The new English Language Study Center, which opened on the Western campus during summer 1986, provides and will continue to provide increasing numbers of international students. When Western did not have an intensive English language program and referred potential students to the English Language Institute at Oregon State University and to other ESL schools, very few students returned to Western after completing their English language training. With an ESL program on the Western campus we will find many of these students enrolling in the regular college degree programs at Western. We also receive the benefit of the E.L.S.C.'s recruiting efforts overseas.

Western is becoming more involved in international faculty exchange programs with overseas colleges and universities, with a visiting professor from Japan in 1985/1986, a professor from the People's Republic of China for the 1986/1987 academic year, and three visiting professors from Thailand for spring term 1987. These will be followed by visiting professors from our "sister college" in Taiwan, Shih Chien College, beginning with fall term 1987. Western is also in the process of establishing student and faculty exchange programs with the University of Kassel in West Germany, Shaanxi Teachers University in the People's Republic of China, and Mahidol University in Thailand. These programs, assist in the movement to internationalize the campus and curriculum, and will help to increase the number of international students and professors teaching and studying at Western.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a noticeable increase of tension in faculty/international student relations on the Western campus accompanying our increase in international student population. This tension is evidenced by the marked increase in memos and phone calls I receive from faculty and administration concerning "problems" with international students. This is certainly not a phenomenon unique to Western. In 1981, Portland State University experienced a similar situation when their international student population rapidly increased to seven percent of the student body. At that time certain embassies reported an increase in the number of student complaints concerning their treatment at PSU. These embassies received more complaints from their PSU students than any other university in the United States (Stillings & Protonentis, 1981).

Not all the contributing factors to the problem with faculty/international student relations are clearly evident, but they seem to focus on a rapid increase in international student enrollment, the world political situation (particularly Middle East/United States relations), competition for limited educational funding, stereotyping, a high concentration of international students in certain majors, and a general lack of tolerance, acceptance, and understanding on the part of both faculty and students.

Stillings and Protonentis found in their survey of Portland State University professors and international students, that difficulties with

the English language were viewed as a major factor contributing to what both students and faculty perceived as problems in faculty/international student relations. The professors attributed this problem to inadequate preparation in reading, writing, oral comprehension, and oral communication skills. Many professors stated that cheating and plagiarism were major problems among their international students. These problems took the form of cooperation on out of class assignments and direct copying of another student's test answers during class.

Negotiating for grade changes after they had been assigned was a common and very annoying practice on the part of some international students at PSU. Students who gave gifts and extended social invitations were perceived as attempting to influence grades. This created uncomfortable, and sometimes hostile feelings on the part of some professors.

International students were generally perceived as not realizing the importance of time, schedules, and dead-lines. Professors cited numerous instances of students arriving late to class, not completing assignments on time, asking that tests be postponed, and failing to keep appointments.

Stillings and Protonentis reported in their research at Portland State that some professors believed that there was an international student network that provided information on "easy" classes. In fact, many believed that professors with a high international student enrollment in their classes were being evaluated negatively by their colleagues. The assumption seemed to be that high international student enrollment in a class implied that the professor was an "easy grader" and gave "breaks" to international students. The same survey indicated that the international students felt they were not treated fairly; that they made a major financial contribution to the school through their tuition, but found it difficult to have their needs understood or met.

International students complained of difficulty finding professors at PSU who would advise them. They wanted professors to take a personal interest in their success in the class; to help with understanding course concepts and requirements. They saw stereotyping on the part of professors as a major block to students' capacity to achieve or fail as an individual. They felt that professors should not allow negative interaction with one student from a particular culture to affect their relationships with others from the same culture.

International students perceived that a general lack of communication with U.S. students created barriers which made them feel excluded from class activities and general campus interaction. Language problems were recognized as a major problem in adjusting to the university environment. Many international students expressed difficulty in understanding professors' lectures and directions. They mentioned that some professors talked too fast, and used idioms and slang they were unable to translate.

Informal discussions with professors and international students seem to indicate these same feelings and problems exist at Western. International students complain that certain professors do not like international students as a group; that no matter how hard they try , they cannot get a fair grade. Many complain that certain professors talk too fast for them to follow, and erase the chalkboard before information can be written down.

Professors complain bitterly that many of the international students are consistantly late for class, have poor attendance, and are often late with assignments. They feel that the negotiating or bargaining for grades after they have been assigned is extremely annoying and a major problem.

Recently, a Western professor told me not to advise international students into certain classes in his department. He said professors in his department did not have time to spend explaining to students who "do not understand English". These classes are some that are promoted by the department chair to fulfill LACC requirements.

When roll was called in a business class at the beginning of winter term 1987, after several international students with names beginning with "A" had been called, the first obviously "American" name was called and a student commented, "now we're getting to our people." This seems to be indicative of the feelings concerning international students on the Western campus held by many of the American students.

My assessment of faculty/international student relations at Western is, that in spite of attempts to internationalize the campus and the curriculum, the intercultural perspective is not being widely employed. By intercultural perspective I mean accepting other cultural frames of reference as equal to our own- to acknowledge other patterns of perception, communication, and behavior, not as right or wrong, but as appropriate to the culture in which they occur. There seems to be little

attempt to understand the values, feelings, and behaviors of international students by many of the faculty, or the faculty by the international students. Cultural differences, when they are recognized, are viewed as problems, not as resources.

Many researchers of adjustment problems of international students (Pruitt, 1978; C.S. Perkins et al, 1977; Hendricks and Skinner, 1977; Penn and Durham, 1978; Payind, 1979) have found that the primary problem in international student adaptation to life in the United States and to life on U.S. college and university campuses is communication in the English language. Language is an obvious and major problem for many international students, however, increased language facility is not the only answer to reducing communication problems. We must not overlook other vital components of the communication process. We can minimize problems in communication if we learn the skills of intercultural communication and practice these skills with our students.

Intercultural Communication

Interaction with international students should not leave you annoyed, frustrated, and misunderstood. Rather these interactions should leave you satisfied, pleased, and understood.

Porter and Samovar (1972) say, "intercultural communication occurs whenever a message producer is a member of one culture and a message receiver is a member of another culture. In this circumstance, we immediately are faced with the problems inherent in a situation where a message encoded in one culture must be decoded in another."

Intercultural communication involves expectations, perceptions, choices, actions, and interpretations (Condon and Yousef, 1975). When we communicate we are all influenced by our own cultural backgrounds. Culture shapes the individual communicator. It provides the whole range of communicative behaviors and meanings each person possesses. These behaviors and meanings possessed by people from diverse cultures will be very different and these differences can lead to all kinds of difficulties. There are, however, intercultural communication skills which, if understood and practiced, can reduce or nearly eliminate these difficulties.

I hope each faculty member will make every effort to be an effective intercultural communicator. I feel that basic communication problems exacerbate tension in faculty/international student relationships. Effectiveness in intercultural communication means minimizing misunderstanding. Although it is probably impossible to have two people, especially people from different cultures, communicate without some misunderstanding, it is possible to minimize the problem.

Japanese/American Communication Problems

John Condon in With Respect to the Japanese reported these American communication behaviors perceived by the Japanese as particularly annoying, and described some Japanese behaviors that Americans complain about.

American communication habits that Japanese find irksome:

a. Americans talk too much.
b. Americans interrupt other people.
c. Americans don't listen enough.
d. Americans seem to think that if they don't tell you something you won't know it.
e. Americans are too direct in asking questions, giving opinions, and poking fun.
f. Americans fail to express thanks and appreciation sufficiently.
g. Americans are reluctant to admit faults or limitations; they seldon apologize, even just to be polite.

Japanese communication habits that Americans complain about:

a. Japanese are so polite and so cautious that you never know what they are thinking.
b. Japanese use vague words and ambiguous expressions so that it is hard to know where they stand.
c. Japanese seem to be afraid to assert their individual opinions-too worried about what other people are thinking.
d. Japanese are forever expressing thanks and appreciation for something.
e. Japanese are always apologizing, even when there is nothing to apologize for.
f. Japanese are too formal.

Americans seem to be very conscious of mannerisms from other cultures which are annoying, but are quite often oblivious to their own mannerisms which people from other cultures find troubling. These annoying communication habits occur frequently enough for them to constitute areas of significant misunderstanding.

There has been considerable research directed toward identifying effective communication behaviors within one's own culture. Samovar and Porter synthesized these findings and reached consensus on seven behaviors that are important in effective intercultural communication and relationships: 1. capacity to communicate respect; 2. capacity to be non-judgemental; 3. capacity to personalize one's knowledge and

perceptions; 4. capacity to display empathy; 5. capacity to be flexible; 6. capacity for turn-taking; and 7. tolerance for ambiguity. From these seven behaviors I selected five which I believe are particularly important to our faculty in effective intercultural communication.

Respect

The ability to express positive regard for another person certainly is an important component of intercultural communication. If you are able through "body language", smiles, gestures, and verbal encouragement to convince others that you are truely interested in them, they will be more likely to respond in a positive way.

Non-Judgemental

Your students like to feel they are not being judged by you before they have had an opportunity to fully explain or present their case. If you keep interrupting them or nod disagreement before they have completed what they wish to say, you are setting up barriers to effective communication. When people feel they have been listened to thoroughly, they will be more open to your reactions, positive or negative.

Personalized Knowledge & Perceptions

If you are able to recognize that your values, attitudes, opinions, and beliefs are your own, and not necessarily shared by others, you will probably be better able to relate to others and form productive relationships. If you often use phrases like "I think" or "In my experience" rather than "Micronesians are...", "Japanese will...", or "Americans believe...", you are probably a person who has been able to personalize your knowledge and perceptions, and will be more successful in intercultural communication.

Display Empathy

You can be a more effective communicator and develop more positive human relationships if you have the ability to put yourself in another person's shoes. Through care in listening and observing, and a sincere effort to understand the other person's point of view, you can develop some degree of empathy toward that viewpoint.

Turn-Taking

People enjoy taking turns in a discussion. Try to effectively manage your interactions, assessing the needs of the other person or persons, and take turns in discussions. Don't monopolize the discussion and don't refuse to take responsibility for your share.

Sometimes in intercultural communication the value of silence is overlooked. Most Americans are familiar with the expression "silence is golden", however, they usually believe that ideas and comments must be put into words to be communicated. Speaking indicates that a person is paying attention and has ideas or opinions. To Americans, silence usually has a negative connotation-displaying tension, awkwardness, or shyness.

"Hollow drums make the most noise" is a favorite Japanese proverb related to the value of silence. In Japan, speaking too much is a sign of immaturity. Silence can convey respect for the person who has spoken or provide a means of unifying a group (Condon,1984). Keep in mind that most Japanese students have been taught that to listen respectfully is the appropriate behavior for one in a subordinate position.

Culture Shock

The *hidden dimensions* of a culture include patterns of verbal communication, nonverbal communication, values and attitudes, customs, ways of interacting socially, and basic assumptions that are normally acquired as a part of growing up as a native member of a culture. Members of a culture themselves probably are not fully aware of the nature or impact of these dimensions, however, they instinctively know how to deal with situations involving the hidden dimensions when they are acting within the context of their own familiar culture (AFS Orientation Handbook, 1981).

"Culture Shock" is a term used to describe the extreme anxiety that is commonly experienced by virtually everyone who attempts to go about his or her daily affairs in the absence of familiar patterns of communication and social interaction. This most frequently happens when a person visits another culture for an extended period of time. The visitor's expectations, as shaped by the hidden dimensions of his/her home culture, clash with the expectations of the people in the host country, as shaped by the hidden dimensions of their culture. This clash of expectations tends to make the visitor suffer the confusion, frustration, isolation, and homesickness that characterize most cases of culture shock. Culture shock does not necessarily occur only following prolonged interpersonal contact with culturally different people. For some people, the absence of familiar food or the need to become accustomed to different sleeping habits can be sufficient to cause culture shock.

To a greater or lesser extent, all international students face the problem of culture shock. Culture shock is a burden added to the usual problems faced by any new college student, those of seeking housing, making new friends, and beginning a new course of study. In extreme circumstances, the stress of culture shock may be so severe that the student develops psychological and physical symptoms that interfere with his/her academic progress.

All international students seem to overcome the effects of culture shock. However, this adaptation to a new culture occurs within varying timeframes. Adapting to a culture requires openness to new experiences and ways of living, as well as a sensitivity to the hidden dimensions, and the ability to learn the unfamiliar ways in which people of the host culture express themselves, both verbally and nonverbally.

The American Field Service Orientation Handbook has provided a list of "tips" to overcome culture shock; practical steps the international student can take to increase the possibility of overcoming this frustration, confusion, and homesickness, and adapting to the new culture.

Seven Tips for the International Student on Developing Cross-Cultural Adaptation Skills

1. Learn the language by using it. Language is your key to involvement in your new culture. Remember, understanding others and making yourself understood in a new language requires more rephrasing, repeating, and rechecking than usual.

2. Be aware. Listen and observe carefully, paying special attention to nonverbal cues which give insight into the process of cross-cultural communication.

3. Suspend Judgement. A natural tendency to immediately attach a "good" or "bad" label to all you observe or experience can be a major stumbling block to understanding and participating in a new culture. Observe and describe, but accept others and their integrity before evaluating.

4. Try to empathize. Put yourself in the other person's place and try to look at the situation from her or his perspective. This is especially important when cultural differences are involved in the situation.

5. Recognize that anxiety is natural. Communication and adjustment across cultures is not easy; there is often a stress factor involved in interaction between people from differing cultures. Openness, a willingness to take risks, and an ability to laugh at one's mistakes can help you deal productively with anxiety.

6. Be honest. If you are confused about something or if misunderstandings arise, it is usually best to admit your confusion rather than pretend that everything is all right.

7. Become involved. Show your willingness to learn about the people and culture by participating in daily life.

As a long-term visitor or an exchange professor in another country, these seven "tips" can be invaluable to you in overcoming your own culture shock and assisting you in adapting successfully to your new environment. As a faculty member you can assist the international student in his or her attempt to overcome culture shock by following some of these same tips both inside and outside the classroom. Following these tips can also assist you in cross-cultural communication. *Try to empathize* ; put yourself in your international student's place and try to look at the situation from her or his perspective. *Suspend judgement* ; don't immediately attach a good or bad label to the international student's behavior. Try to accept them on their integrity and evaluate later. *Be aware* ; listen and observe carefully when you are with an international student. Watch for those nonverbal cues which give insight into the process of cross-cultural communication.

Please remember that making yourself understood and understanding others in cross-cultural communication, especially when a new language is involved, requires more rephrasing, repeating, and rechecking than usual. Keep in mind that the international student may be embarrassed, and not be willing to be honest with you and admit that he or she does not understand.

Transition Problems of International Students in the U.S.

The legal and social status of foreign (international) students is that of an *outsider.* The term foreigner denotes outside one's own place or country--an outsider. The legal term for international students which classifies them as non-immigrant aliens supports a perception among many Americans that foreign students belong elsewhere.

Americans regard international students as somehow different, a "them not us" situation. They are interesting, curious, isolated, distant, abrasive, and quiet. Because they are somehow different, international students are sometimes not expected to really understand what is going on within the college. It is assumed that they will have difficulty functioning withing the college and in United States society. Yet, at other times they are expected to understand and participate to the same degree as American students, with little or no recognition of their differences.

Many American students believe that international students are unfriendly and "cliquish". This belief comes about from a failure to understand that the international student's social and legal status puts a premium on close relationships with those who can be emotionally and instrumentally supportive. Most international students' seem to choose their close friends from among international students from other countries or fellow nationals.

In higher education we often assume that international students will improve their understanding of Americans and help American students gain knowledge of other cultures, merely through their presence on the campus. Actually, it takes more than educational experiences on the campus to bring this about. It takes very intensive personal interaction to effectively familiarize American and international students with one another's people and culture. Penn and Durham (1978) found the major barriers to personal interaction between Americans and international students to be related to lack of understanding of language and unfamiliarity with U.S. customs. American students identified barriers such as lack of familiarity with foreign customs, misinterpretation of actions, dislike of certain national groups and certain characteristics (such as agressive behavior and attitudes toward the opposite sex), and lack of common interests.

Americans also saw language misunderstandings as a significant contributor to barriers in personal interaction.

Penn and Durham's research indicated that personal interaction and friendship between international and American students is closely related to a variety of factors including similarity of academic field and interests, willingness to participate in campus activities, and extent of previous foreign travel.

Much of the research data on international students in the United States over the past ten years indicate that all international students experience problems when they attempt to make the transition from their home country environment to that of United States colleges and universities. Adelegan and Parks (1985) in their study of East, West, and North African students, found that the subjects of their study experienced the greatest difficulty in areas associated with differences in culture. They generated a list of problem areas which proved to be of at least moderate concern to the students surveyed.

a. developing relationships with local people,
b. receiving news from home
c. adjustment to differences in climate,
d. difficulty in getting food, clothing, and music from their home country,
e. lack of association with people from their home country,
f. developing relationships with member of the opposite sex, and with other students in general,
g. adjusting to local food,
h. overcoming lonliness and making new friends,
i. finding a place to live,
j. adjusting to local moral standards,
k. transportation to campus, shopping, etc.

All the problem areas cited by the students were associated with letting go of the familiar and adjusting to the new environment. They wanted to keep close contact with family and friends and worried about making new friends and getting to know the local people, securing suitable housing, and adjusting to local morals, climate, and food. These are the typical problems of transition. Adelegan and Parks summarized the dilemma of transition well when they observed that "the students looked back to the

familiar world of their home countries and were worried about successfully adapting to their new environment. They were straddling two cultures, reluctantly relinguishing one and adaptively confronting the other".

Older African students had greater difficulty making the transition from their home culture to that of the United States than did younger students. They experienced more difficulty in developing meaningful social relationships, in getting around town, and in adjusting to the food, climate, and morals of the locality. Married students also had greater difficulty making the social transition than did single students. Family responsibilities and sharing among family members may have taken the time that single students were able to devote to socializing with other students.

Pruitt (1978) found that the major problems faced by the international students in her survey were in the areas of adjusting to a different climate, communication with Americans, discrimination, homesickness, depression, irritability, and tiredness; particularly when they first arrived on campus. Most of these difficuties, at least, diminished over time. Only a small minority of the students felt comfortable with the basic elements of U.S. culture such as food, climate, dating patterns, establishing friendships, and U.S. values. Experiences of discrimination appeared to be the principal source of alienation from U.S. culture. The majority of the students, however, were satisfied with the education they were receiving.

In a study conducted at the University of Georgia (Perkins et al, 1977) comparing the adjustment problems experienced by three particular international student groups (Chinese, Indian, Other-- consisting of non-Chinese and non-Indian), it was found that, although there were some significant variation in individual student groups, all the international students surveyed experienced similar adjustment problems. The problem areas identified as significant were English proficiency, adequacy of educational preparation, racial or religious discrimination, unfriendliness of people from the community, homesickness, and climate. The Chinese rated English proficiency, racial or religious discrimination, homesickness, and unfriendliness of people from the community as more important problems than either of the other respondent groups. The findings of this study are consistent with both previous and more recent research; that while international students have many problems in common, there are also problems peculiar to certain national groups.

Culture and International Student Relationships

"Implicit cultural assumptions" are those beliefs which are situated so deep within any culture that they are never stated, questioned, or defended. For many Americans they are taken as "givens" which any intelligent, cultured individual anywhere in the world accepts. Actually, as you are surely aware, every intelligent, cultured, individual does not accept all of our American implicit cultural assumptions. Most of the world's people operate within very different implicit cultural assumptions which are usually at variance with those held by many Americans. *Isn't it surprising how un-American a very large proportion of the world's population is culturally?*

Harris and Moran (1979) and Hsu (1969) identified major cultural assumptions identified as American:

- No belief in fate; instead personal control of the environment
- Change seen as inevitable and desirable
- Equality/egalitarianism
- Individualism
- Self-help concept
- Competition and free enterprise
- future orientation
- Action orientation
- Informality
- Directness and openness
- Practicality
- Materialism
- Problem-solving orientation
- Cause-and-effect logic

Some Common Stereotypes of Americans Held by Foreigners

- Always in a hurry
- Outgoing, friendly
- Hard working
- Informal
- Loud, rude, boastful, immature
- No class consciousnes

- All wealthy
- Know very little about other countries
- Extravagent, wasteful
- Racially prejudiced
- Disrespectful of authority
- Generous
- Think they have all the answers

Pruitt (1978) in her research on adaptation of foreign students on American campuses found that the respondents had more negative than positive impressions of United States culture. Some of the values most highly criticized were materialism, sexual permissiveness, racial prejudice, competitiveness, and lack of respect for people from other countries. Values praised included industriousness, efficiency, informality, and democratic ideals. The results of her study seemed to reflect cultural differences in such areas as sense of humor, pace of living, the woman's role in society, sexual mores, religion, and even education.

Stereotypical Conceptions of International Students

In the classroom, Western's professors may have expectations of the international student which the students can misunderstand or find difficult to accept. In the relative equality and participatory atmosphere in the U.S. college classroom, quite often the international student finds himself or herself in a very unfamiliar situation. If the student attempts to deviate from his or her own educational traditions, there may be a tendency for her/him to over-react, monopolize too much time, or begin speaking dogmatically (Stewart, 1972).

There are some great differences in the patterns of thinking between Americans and international students. For example, many U.S. professors describe international students as lacking in analytical thinking. The international student tends to be subjective and descriptive when they write papers. These students avoid analysis, and when forced to analyze, usually make inappropriate generalizations.

Competition is the primary method in the United States to motivate groups. Americans, with their individualism and cultural value of

achievement, respond well to this technique. When this same approach is applied to a culture which does not hold the same values, the effort is ineffective and may produce negative consequences . If the culture is one where the value of saving face is important or one where dependency on others is desirable, competition will not be met with the enthusiasm it engenders among Americans.

Some faculty hold an extreme, stereotypical view that foreign students are alike in their insistance that they receive special treatment at the hands of the college/university they attend, their image of themselves as favored beings, their self-righteousness. Others are concerned the students are trying to circumvent the true objective of their education, benefit to their home country, by settling permanently in the United States.

Hopefully, the faculty and Western's international student relations personnel will be able to differentiate between problems caused by cultural differences and those originating from the personality traits of the students. Practicing good intercultural communication techniques, knowledge of common problems encountered by international students, being aware of the resources available for international students, and sensitivity to our own cultural background and its possible negative influence on us, will go a long way toward helping us discern these differences.

Counseling the International Student

International students studying in the United States are identified as a high risk group under considerable stress, however, research indicates that counseling services which meet their special needs are too few and quite often ineffective.

The skills needed for counseling international students are not generally different from those needed for counseling domestic students. What is strikingly different is the need for *awareness* of the effect of cultural differences on the entire counseling process. Cross-cultural counselors need to develop a repertoire of flexible, sensitive, creative, intuitive, and rational responses to situations that arise in this process. The repertoire of responses must originate in knowledge of the culture of the student seeking help.

In working with the international student the counselor should be aware of the communication style of the student. Communication style is strongly influenced by the culture in which we were raised. Especially relevant to the counseling relationship are cultural differences concerning eye contact, physical contact, conversational "turn-taking", self-disclosure, comfort with ambiguity, comfort with silences, greetings, attention to listening, ways of dealing with conflicts, and decision-making and persuasion styles.

Althen (1981) in exploring the counselor/client relationship reminds us that the counselor of international students needs to be aware of her or his own culturally-biased perceptions, assumptions, values, and behavior. The counselor should be able to openly acknowledge and discuss these biases with the international student client. The client's cultural biases should also be open for discussion. The ability to do this is very important in the establishment of a trusting relationship between the counselor and the client.

The international student, and particularly the Micronesian student, who comes to the counselor and simply sits, or pages through a magazine, is probably trying to establish a relationship. Presence in the counselor's office should be considered a positive act and is preliminary to discussing a problem with the counselor. Typically, the student will drop into the

office to talk and will discuss general topics with the counselor without any problem surfacing. It is only after a relationship has been established that the student will bring up the problem which brought him/her to the office. Quite often students come to talk on three or four occasions before they finally are willing to discuss the real purpose for their visits. When they do come to the point it may be a few minutes before lunch, a class period, or right at the end of a session that creates a limit to discussion. This is not deliberate. It just happens when the student puts off coming to the point for a variety of reasons including embarrassment or feeling ill-at-ease.

Gary Althen in The Handbook of Foreign Student Advising admits the influence of Albert Ellis, the psychologist who labels himself the father of Rational Emotive Therapy (RET), in the counseling aspects of his handbook. The essential notion of Rational Emotive Therapy is that peoples' feelings stem not so much from what happens to them as from ideas they have about what happens to them. Ellis argues that most people have many irrational ideas which, when applied to what happens to them, cause them to become upset. To get rid of the upset, one needs to get rid of the irrational ideas. He claims that with RET one quickly gets at a client's irrational ideas, helps the client to contradict these irrational ideas and replace them with rational ones.

RET appears to be an excellent counseling approach to use with international students. It is a highly directive approach and international students generally want *direction.*. They tend to be less responsive to the non-directive methods preferred by many American counselors. RET is not strongly based on the individual-as-the-center-of-the-universe assumption which characterizes most U.S. approaches to counseling. It recognizes consideration of others as a legitimate criterion in personal decision-making. In addition, foreign college and university students are generally verbally oriented and RET is particularly effective with verbally oriented people.

Although RET will not fit with every counselor's personality or methodology, it is a method that every counselor should investigate and give some consideration as an effective approach with international students. The following are good sources of information on RET theory and

techniques: The New Guide to Rational Living, Ellis and Harper; Humanistic Psychotherapy, Ellis; Growth Through Reason, Ellis; and A Practitioner's Guide to Rational Emotive Therapy, Whalen, DiGiuseppi, Wessler.

ARAB STUDENTS

It is just as inappropriate to generalize about Arabs as it is to make generalizations about people as diverse as Americans. Although they come from the same geographical region, speak the same language, and share similar religious beliefs, the values and behaviors of Arab students can be quite different. This handbook assumes the existance of these variations and will consider some common social characteristics that represent a *core* of Arabism. Because they possess these common characteristics, Arab students in United States higher education institutions quite often share some unique needs and problems.

The need for affiliation is extremely important. Arabs, even those from small nuclear families, grow up with the large network of the extended family. This extensive social network is an integral part of everyday life. It provides a means of social contact, a reinforcement of norms and values, and, maybe most important, a network of support (Meleis, 1982). This affiliation provides a network for dealing with the stresses of their lives. Americans generally cope through a variety of internalized means such as problem solving or rationalization, but the Arab relies on the advice and guidance of others in a crisis situation.

Personal relationships are very important to Arabs. Family and friendships are more important to them than "things". They need a close personal relationship or friendship-someone with whom they can relax, talk, and listen and share in order to feel at home. Parker (1976) says of the Arab student that "if one remembers the ever-present coffee shop, found on nearly every street corner in his own world, one can feel instantly the kind of informal human exchange he will miss in ours".

Arabs need and want to develop feelings about another person and make an effective assessment before beginning to deal with cognitive matters. They do this with questions, body movement, posture, and eye contact and as a result, very little space separates the Arab from those with whom he would associate. Trust is developed through these contacts. Because of their high affiliation and because of the significance of body movement and eye contact in establishing trust, Arabs tend to be more verbally oriented. This cultural orientation carries over into education, where for

many, both graduate and undergraduate, written assignments may be the first in their experience as students.

Another social property which has a marked effect on the performance of the Arab student in the U.S. college or university is the orientation to time. For the Arab, time is not to be utilized, but to be exploited. Therefore, matters previously arranged; matters that might be considered as pressing to westerners are, for the Arab, of less importance than the matter immediately at hand. This means that appointments are broken and meetings begin late or not at all. To the Arab, nothing matters but the business at hand. Whatever else might have been scheduled for the day can be dealt with tomorrow.

Basic Differences in Education Systems

Arabs studying in the United States are also handicapped by some basic differences between the Arab and U.S. educational systems. In the Arab educational system all students enter a structured program and proceed through it without being given the opportunity to select electives. The only thing they are allowed to select is their major, and even this is determined by the student's grade point average in the last year of high school. The advisor in a U.S. college provides an explanation of the alternatives open to the student and leaves the final decision to the student. The Arab student finds this approach unsatisfactory and, at least initially, finds these decisions difficult to make. Actually, the Arab student, and particularly the newly-arrived Arab student, needs a paternal relationship with faculty advisors. The Arab student expects to look up to advisors and professors, therefore, they should provide very strong guidance initially.

American students have learned to cope with the U.S. system of education, the idea of student-as-decision maker, at least since junior high school. They have learned to problem solve, to use the library for research, to analyze information, and to expect certain consequences from their decisions. For the Arab student the experience has been quite different. They have learned that someone more qualified, more educated, and more expert than they in matters of education should be responsible for decisions related to their education. Meleis reports, "this decision making is, in fact, a measure that the person in charge cares for the student and works for the student's best interest. When that decision is not made, not only is the Arab student overwhelmed by unfamiliar alternatives, but

there is also concern that the advisor or faculty member does not care for the student. It is supposed that the decision is not made for them because the person in charge does not want to be accountable for the consequences; that, the student reasons, is whythe advisor or faculty member wants the student to make a decision for which there is inadequate information".

The belief in the educator's wisdom and knowledge is only equalled, and perhaps surpassed, by belief in the wisdom of published material. Analytical or critical assessment of published material is rarely done because of the revered respect for such material inculcated in the Arab student. Meleis says, "furthermore, there is an informal belief that whatever is written or shown, if it is by an authority, becomes incorporated into one's knowledge and in fact becomes the knowledge. To separate that knowledge from one's own ideas is unwarrented because one's ideas evolve and depend on knowledge received from authority. Therefore, plagiarism is a totally foreign concept to Arab students".

Arabic Language Roadblocks to Learning English

The Arab student believes that Arabic is the most beautiful and the most complete language in the world. Since Arabic is the language of the Koran, the book of truth, it must surely be the language chosen of God. To many Arabs, English is merely a utilitarian vehicle to attain their goal of a U.S. college or university degree (Leman, 1981).

There are features of the Arabic language (pronunciation, alphabet, grammar, and syntax) which may impede the English language learning process of native speakers of Arabic. This statement is based on the assumption that both the absence of comparable linguistic features, and the existance of conflicting ones, generally provide roadblocks to acquiring second language proficiency.

The Arabic alphabet consists of twenty-eight letters. Twenty of these letters can be joined to their following letters; eight cannot. Most of the letters in the Arabic alphabet have two basic forms, usage of which is determined by position in a word. The Arabic alphabet has additional sounds and lacks certain sounds which create many spelling problems.

Arabic is written from right to left, and this causes some difficulty, although learning to read from left to right does not seem to lead to

significant problems. Arabic does not have capital/small letters in appearance or function. In Arabic there is no urgent reason to leave spaces between words since the end of a word can usually be signified by the form of its final letter and there is no need for internal or external punctuation. Therefore, you find capitals and commas appearing in some strange places in an Arab student's writing.

Arabic does not contain the following common English sounds:

CH; Arabs often write it "tsh.

V; Arabs often confuse with "f."

P; Arabs often confuse with "b."

G; Arabs occasionally confuse with "k."

R; Tends to be trilled.

JH (as in television); Arabs often confuse with "j."

Arabic does contain the following sounds, non-existent in English, which may influence pronunciation:

glottal stops,

aspirated "h",

kh - as in German,

hard s, tongue on teeth,

hard d, tongue on teeth, a uniquely Arabic sound,

hard aspirated t,

gh; like French r,

k sound, made deep in throat.

Arabic does not use the verb "to be" in its present indicative meaning. Instead it uses a construction called jumia ismia, the nominal sentence. The following are all literal translations of perfectly acceptable Arabic sentences:

The student in the classroom.
Books on the table.
This book.
That book Mohammed.

Arabic does not have a verb "to have." Instead, the possessive relationship is expressed by prepositions or possessive pronouns. Prepositions such as (and), which can be roughly translated as "near", or (l), which can be translated roughly as "of", are used to show possession. Thus it might sound perfectly acceptable for a student to say and hear: "I am with book," or "I am near book," or "I (am) of book."

Possessive pronouns, like adjectives in Arabic, follow the nouns they modify. It should also be stressed that Arabic makes no distinction between possessive pronouns and object nouns. The following might sound perfectly acceptable to an ear used to hearing Arabic speech patterns:

Book my, book me, me book.
Book he, book him, him book.
They book.
Book you.

Idafa construction expresses a possessive relationship between two nouns. An Arab might feel perfectly comfortable and correct saying:

Book the man, instead of the man's book.
Book the student, instead of the student's book.
Cup coffee, instead of a cup of coffee.
Chair wood, instead of wooden chair.

Arabic has two main verb tenses, perfect and imperfect (one to express completed action and one to express action which is not completed).

Completed Action-*darasa* could be translated as:

He studied.
He has studied.
He was studying.
He has studied, or , he had been studying.

Incompleted Action-*yadrus* could be translated as:

He is studying.
He studies.
He will study.
He will be studying.
He has studied.

The Arabic imperfect can be used for past, present, and future. Future tense sometimes proves a problem in itself when a student feels that "only God knows the future, so it is foolish to talk of it" The near future does not seem to be a problem for most students, however, you might find statements concerning the future followed by "if it is God's will" or the Arabic *Inshallah.*

Islamic and Western Educational Values

Parker (1976) says that "any attempt to define Arab "culture" must recognize Islam as its foundation". The religious heritage of Islam is basic to any explanation of most Middle Eastern students' behavior in the host country; particularly their attitude of fatalism toward events in their lives.

There are some major conflicts between Islamic and Western values in the classroom. The entire social structure of Moslem countries tends to undermine the goals of a Western scholar. Logical thought processes, on which most Western professors rely instinctively, have not been taught.(Kohls, 1981) Deductive reasoning in classrooms in the Islamic world is unheard of. Islamic education is an imitative rather than a creative system. Learning is primarily through memorization and imitation rather than by independent research and original work.The professor is thought of only as a lecturer and a recorder. He teaches what has been true

from the beginning of time and known since the time of Mohammed. Because these truths are unchanging, there is nothing to discuss, question, or challenge. Accordingly, there is no discussion and no personal opinion in the Moslem classroom.

The teaching process is a continuation of the oral tradition. What has been learned in the past is now transmitted verbatim to the student who writes it down and then memorizes it. In the Moslem classroom there is only one truth. The idea that two or more "experts" might interpret the same facts in opposite or even different ways is inconceivable to them.

In Islamic society it is the form, not the content, that is important. It is not so important that the students have a high rate of absenteeism as long as the books show full attendance. Knowledge of the subject is not so important, as long as the curriculum makes it look like the subject is being learned. The student does not feel that learning itself is important. What is important is the report which shows the instructor has given a passing grade. *The common concept is that the instructor gives you a grade; you do not earn it.*

A concomitant problem is that of cheating. There rarely seems to be a test given in a Moslem classroom where cheating does not occur. It is sufficient for one student to understand the material and share it with the others. According to Kohls, what instructors from the West view as cheating can be condoned because,

> "one of the five pillars of Islam is alms-giving, the aid one gives to those whom Allah has made less fortunate. Thus, cheating, and by extension bribing,... are not looked upon as being morally wrong as they are in the Western world; in fact, in many cases they are considered laudable acts. To the Moslem, it is an obvious fact that Allah has made some people more intelligent than others, and, in a sense, classroom performance is pre-ordained; there is no feeling that hard work may enable one to pass by his own efforts, make him a better person, etc.; there is only the feeling that, unaided, many will fail, and that it is thus a duty to pass on knowledge to the less fortunate ones.

> In fact, the teachers themselves aid and abet the cheating by lax observation during exams, for a good class record reflects favorably on their abilities as teachers!"

In the Islamic world it appears that over the centuries the people have come to believe that individual effort comes to naught; that effort does not count; it is Allah who determines what is or is not achieved. This means that the end rather than the means is of value, while in the Western world it is generally the other way around. Again a matter of the form being more important than the content.

These values are basic to students from the Islamic world. Problems arise when these basic Islamic students' values are in direct conflict with the values of Western Oregon State College professors or any non-Islamic post-secondary professors. These values, however, are wrong only as far as they conflict with the values held in the West.

Note: Parts of this chapter were adapted from Paul Barker's paper, "Arabic Roadblocks to Learning English". English Language Center, Warner Pacific College.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN U.S. POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Micronesian Special Services Project (Project Micro) has been an important part of the Western Oregon State College campus since 1976. Students from the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands have been welcomed to our campus since 1972. At first there were only a limited number of students on the campus, but in 1974, students began arriving in substantial numbers. The idea of a Micronesian Special Services Project was born in early 1976 on the campus of Western Oregon State College, then Oregon College of Education. As a result, "Project Micro", one of five projects for the support of Micronesian post-secondary students was funded by the U.S. Department of Education through Title IV, Special Services for the Disadvantaged. In any one year there have been between 36 and 70 students from Micronesia enrolled and pursuing degrees at Western Oregon State College.

Currently (1986/1987 academic year) there are sixty students from the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Micronesia) enrolled at Western, comprising representatives from each of the four governments of the Trust Territory-Federated States of Micronesia (Kosrae, Pohnpei, Truk, and Yap), Republic of Belau (Palau), Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Northern Marianas. These students are studying in a wide variety of academic and professional areas, including Elementary and Secondary Education, Business Administration, Computer Science, Law Enforcement, Corrections, and Interdisciplinary Studies.

Based on the U.S. federal educational financial support guidelines, all Trust Territory students are considered to be from disadvantaged backgrounds; almost all are first generation college students; all are considered to be of limited proficiency in English (English is their second language or, for some, their third or fourth language). Economic conditions and family size are such that almost all families in the Trust Territory live at the poverty level as determined by U.S. "cash income standards", and the educational systems of the Trust Territory are still largely in the developmental stages compared to most in the U.S.

Trust Territory students are international students, but international students with a difference. Because of the Trust Territory status, they have been eligible for U.S. federal financial assistance.

In late 1986 this status changed as a result of the conclusion of the Compact of Free Association. Citizens of the Northern Marianas, which is now the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, are citizens of the United States. The Republic of Belau remains a part of the Trust Territory with its status unchanged. The Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands are "freely associated" with the United States. This status provides them with free access to and from the United States, they can join the U.S. military, they can work without a work permit, they are eligible for certain U.S. welfare programs, and they may be able to establish residency for tuition purposes.

"Micronesia" is a geographic and political term. There are no common people in these islands who should be classified as Micronesians. Language aside, a Trukese is at least as different from a Palauan as a liberal urbanite from San Francisco is from a conservative Iowa farmer. There are nine distinct languages and many dialects spoken in Micronesia. Some societies are matrilineal and some are patrilineal. The Micronesian students at Western now and in the future remain representatives of different, distinct cultural groups with distinct, different native languages. They are brought together, in many instances, for the first time on Western's campus. Their needs, however, are held in common.

Traditionally in Micronesia, knowledge is private, not public property. Every person has a particular role to play in the society and the knowledge necessary for that role is carefully ascribed. The possessors of knowledge are consulted by others when the need arises. This knowledge, in the oral tradition, is handed down, as well as developed, adapted, and modified, from one generation to the next.

Traditional Education in Micronesia

This traditional view of knowledge combined with the traditional learning style of identification, prolonged observation, imitation, and cooperative participation gave rise to a particular orientation toward education. Communication takes place along hierarchical lines from superior to subordinate. The search for knowledge is the pursuit of a definitive answer, solution, or explanation from a higher authority rather than critical dialogue or secondary analysis (Ballendorf,1981). This concept of knowledge and education, in many ways, is antithetical to the view held by

the Western world. Students attempting to make the crossover from a centuries old tradition to a very different western culture, find it extremely difficult to adjust.

Trust Territory students come to Western after attending island K-12 schools (some have community college experience) from systems introduced by U.S. educational "experts" who developed the Trust Territory in the 1950's, patterned after systems in the United States. Micronesian students enter U.S. post-secondary schools with very high expectations for success based mainly on their grade-point averages in Trust Territory schools. They have little realization of the inadequate preparation they bring to their college experience in the United States.

Personal educational goals for Micronesian students are generally similar to those of other international students. Unlike students from most foreign countries, however, it is not only the intellectually elite student who is allowed to go on to higher education. Generally speaking anyone with a 2.50 GPA and airfare may leave their island and seek a college degree in the United States. The transplanted U.S. system of education found in the islands instills the same contemporary western value of higher education in Micronesian students. However, Micronesians are from a number of non-technological societies and are entering an educational setting created for the purpose of an industrialized world. They are caught in the middle of traditional cultural values and a society in transition, with an increasing need for health professionals, computer scientists, people educated in law enforcement and corrections, economics, elementary, secondary, and special education, business, public administration, political science, law, etc. (Moore, 1985).

Basic Educational Problems

An article appeared in Glimpses of Micronesia titled "Micronesia: An Educational Disaster Area?" which provided data that indicate very clearly that the Trust Territory (Micronesia) may well be an educational disaster area. A breakdown of the percentage of students passing the entrance examination for the Community College of Micronesia yielded these startling results:

Northern Marianas - 41% of 24 applicants

Kosrae - 21.9% of 73 applicants

Pohnpei - 15.8% of 146 applicants

Palau - 9.2% of 87 applicants

Truk - 1.2% of 242 applicants

Marshall Islands - 1.1% of 93 applicants

Yap - 0% of 30 applicants

There are no data to indicate improvement in the quality of the educational preparation of these students. Data continue to reflect a marked decline in mathematics and English test scores of graduates of the various Trust Territory public high schools.

In a study done by Educational Testing Service of 473,944 students taking the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) between September 1978 and August 1980, Trust Territory students again did not fare very well. Mean total score for the Caroline Islands (Pohnpei, Kosrae, Yap, Truk, and Palau) was 443 (N-779); the mean total score for the Northern Marianas was 492 (N-126); and the mean total score for the Marshall Islands was 409 (N-163). These scores indicated poor listening comprehension, structure and written expression, reading comprehension, and vocabulary. It is important to note here that very few United States colleges or universities will accept a student into their degree programs with a TOEFL score below 500. In fact, many colleges and universities are now requiring scores of 525 or 550 for entrance to their undergraduate degree programs. Western Oregon State College, because of its long-standing agreement with the Trust Territory governments and contract agreements with the U.S. Department of Education, does not require S.A.T., A.C.T., or T.O.E.F.L. scores for entrance from Trust Territory students.

In spite of their lack of a basic core of the educational and cultural background found in their U.S. counterparts, the retention rate among the Micronesian Special Services Project students has been over 80% each year for the past six years. Sixty-two students from the M.S.S.P. have received their degree from Western. Most of these students returned to

their home island where they were employed in careers for which they were educated.

Cultural Differences

Micronesians in general have less of the "Puritan Ethic" in them than the American. They have not been oriented to striving, driving themselves, getting to the point, making the most of every minute, or mortifying themselves for failure on an exam. They tend to be more relaxed and often find the intense competitive spirit among American students and teachers a bit ludicrous. They have not been taught to be time-conscious like Americans and must force themselves to be on time.

Strongly under the influence of family guidance and control until relatively late in life, Micronesian students are usually not called on to independently make crucial or responsible decisions affecting their welfare or future. Thus, when suddenly placed in a new environment where they are asked to manage large sums of money, budget study time, and, in general, discipline themselves to the extent that they must--not only to deal with the normal problems of college life but with those of a foreign student in a very dissimilar culture--they liken themselves to being "in an outrigger in the middle of the Pacific with no sail, no compass, and a broken paddle".

Because of the relatively rapid superimposition of the Spanish, German, Japanese, and United States cultures in the past eighty or ninety years and because of the more recent dumping of the "trinkets" of U.S. affluence into the Trust Territory (autos, televisions, etc.), the Micronesian student has had to deal with a serious value conflict. The result has often been a lack of pride in their own culture and a feeling that it is inferior rather than just different. The things that are important to them just do not seem to be important to people in the United States. I feel that, quite often, when faced with these values conflicts, Islanders tend to discard some of the finest values from their own culture and adopt some of the worst values from that of the United States.

Micronesians often have difficulty expressing themselves naturally once they leave their islands. They lose the use of the gift of Micronesian natural expression as they try to understand the U.S. way. They no longer know in which direction to reach out, nor with which hand. The seriousness

of their value conflict becomes clear when they are still in the islands. It manifests itself in the youth suicide rate in the Trust Territory (among the highest in the world) and the extensive alcohol problem. When they arrive in the United States a combination of homesickness, the closing of the usual channels for natural expression and need gratification, and the college academic gauntlet combine to make alcohol an "escape" and a welcome vehicle for expressing their frustrations.

The needs of Micronesian students begin with their first encounter with "Stateside culture" and the regimen of college academics. Their resultant initial need is that of interpretation on an understandable level of:

a. College requirements,
b. Financial aid applications,
c. Class schedules,
d. College activities,
e. Grade point averages,
f. Budgeting of time and money,
g. Social relationships,
h. Instructor/student relations,
i. Career choices.

Other needs are those that deal with acceptance in college and community, homesickness, living accommodations (first/last month rent, damage /cleaning deposit, leases, etc.), free time with no beach, no reef fish, and no warm seas available, and the ever-present problems generally classified as culture shock.

Every international student suffers some degree of culture shock, but Micronesians experience a more complex set of problems. When they leave their islands for higher education abroad, they also leave behind their sense of place and belonging. With the old cultural restraints on behavior removed; with no social structure to define morality, appropriate behaviors, and personal relationships, the Micronesian abroad faces a very real crisis. It is more than culture shock, for that implies only the impact of the new; the Micronesian's reactions are also drawn from the loss of the familiar.

In spite of the many handicaps and frustrations, Micronesian students,

although often shy, remain steadfastly cooperative and friendly. Human relationships tend to be much more important to them than grades. They take the very new and complex procedures of a computer world, the new diet, the U.S. insistence on time-orientation, and the very stringent requirements of a foreign academic institution cheerfully, if not always with *immediate* success.

There seems to be a strong relationship between the proverbs and axioms of a country or culture and the values held by the people in that culture. In an examination of some of the proverbs and axioms that are generally considered typical of the United States and Micronesia, we realize their dichotomous nature and can likely predict the values of these cultures to be dichotomous as well.

Proverbs of the United States:

A penny saved is a penny earned.
God helps those who help themselves.
A man's home is his castle.
No rest for the wicked.
Time is money.
Don't cry over spilled milk.
Waste not; want not.
Birds of a feather flock together.
A rolling stone gathers no moss.
A stitch in time saves nine.
People in glass houses should not throw stones.

Proverbs from Micronesia:

Put out your arm and a man's hand will reach back.
Like taro, though the leaves are tall, still immature.
Fierceness is like the quietness of the barracuda.
Being big is only like many sections of bamboo.
You are getting tired like a lizard who climbs a tree for no reason.
A person who betrays a confidence is a basket with a hole.
You don't have to chase the shark all the way to the reef.
There is no sense following an escaped fish.
A disobedient child who ignores instructions or commands has the ears of a turtle.

He is like a cat that is quiet all day, but grabbing and sneaky at night. There is wisdom in the betelnut basket.

Micronesian Values	American Values
Micronesians value time for talking, visiting, and contemplating their environment.	Activity and work offer the means of achieving material success. They become more of an end in themselves rather than a means.
Subsistance-level life entails hard work, but work that is organized around a non-Western time value.	Americans work very hard at their leisure time activities.
Micronesians are not money oriented, particularly well ordered or efficient in terms of time vs. costs of production. More concerned with human relationships.	Americans value efficient and practical knowledge ordered toward production and making money.
Micronesians focus on the "now" and progress is the improvement of human relationships.	Future oriented.
Nature will provide for us in time.	We must shape our world, control nature, and make it work for man.
What will be will be. Man's life is controlled by destiny.	We create our own future by what we do.
There is no use rushing away from what I am doing now. There is always plenty of time.	I have to hurry and meet someone now. See you later.
Worry about tomorrow when tomorrow comes.	Save for the future.
Work a little, rest a little. Whatever you do, try to keep other people happy.	If I work hard enough, some day I'll make it to the top.

What I have is yours; what you have is mine.

What's mine belongs only to me.

The sensible man is the one who strikes out on his own, learns to do things for himself, and makes his own decisions.

The wise man is the one who knows his place in the world, respects authority, and does what he's supposed to do.

Always tell the truth no matter how much it hurts.

The feelings of others are more important than an honest answer.

Instructional Behaviors Which Facilitate International Student Learning

Professors can have a significant influence on the learning process of international students. The following are things they can do to enhance the educational experience of students studying abroad and assist them to become more successful both academically and socially.

Use a variety of teaching methods whenever possible: There are cultural differences in both teaching and learning styles. All professors can profit from a greater understanding of differences in learning styles, and greater tolerance of the differences. There is no teaching method or model designed to accomplish all types of learning nor to work with all learning styles. It is particularly inappropriate in teaching international students to claim categorically about the best way to teach anything. Saville-Troike (1978) states very emphatically, "cultural sensitivity and respect requires *relativism* and *flexibility* in teaching styles. Such eclecticism is nothing new as an option in teaching..., but it is necessary, not optional, when teaching students from diverse sociocultural backgrounds." Develop a repertoire of teaching methods that you can use to deal with specific learning situations.

Learn the students' names: Research indicates that learning is facilitiated when it takes place in a good social climate. Something the professor can do to help promote a good social climate, in the classroom and out, is to learn the names of her/his students.

Provide explicit written course requirements: Second language English speakers quite often have difficulty understanding verbal instructions. It is very helpful to provide a typed syllabus for your course which includes specific and detailed course requirements. It is also helpful to go over the syllabus with the students in class.

Avoid the use of slang or idioms: International students have a great deal of difficulty translating slang and idioms into something meaningful to them.

Paraphrase complex ideas: Second language English speakers can

sometimes be assisted in gaining a better understanding of complex concepts and ideas if the professor is willing to paraphrase.

Write key words on the chalkboard: Writing key words and concepts on the chalkboard gives students a clearer understanding of the lecture. This is particularly helpful to international students. Remember to leave the information on the chalkboard long enough for the students to copy it down.

Use peer tutorials: Peer tutorials have proven to be very effective, particularly if the peer is another international student.

Use study questions as guidance: Providing study questions before exams can be useful for all students, but they are particularly helpful for international students and other second language English speakers

Don't use sarcasm or irony: International students generally do not understand sarcasm or irony. Puns and colloquialisms are also difficult for international students to understand. Jokes never seem to translate very well.

Allow students to use Foreign Language/English dictionaries: To force a non-native English speaking international student to take examinations without the use of a Foreign Language/English dictionary puts her/him at a distinct disadvantage.

Evaluation instruments should never be considered culturally neutral: Keep in mind that, no matter how "objective" the format, while a test may be valid for members of one culture, it may not measure what it purports to measure in another. Reliability of tests is affected by many things including ethnicity of the tester, experience of the students taking the test (true-false tests are seldom given in South America and other parts of the world), and whether the test is oral or written. Also, second language English speakers seldom understand those little nuances of the English language that make a true-false test much more than a guessing game. Research indicates many international students have difficulty completing examinations in the same length of time as American students. Ideally, especially during their first year, it would be extremely helpful to allow students from non-English speaking countries more time to complete examinations (for example, maybe 75 minutes instead of 50).

Initiate contact with students who are having difficulty:
Remember that in many cultures an offer for the international student to "come by my office" if they are having problems is usually not considered to be a legitimate offer of assistance. "Can you come to my office this Friday at 10?" is considered a legitimate offer to provide assistance.

Develop sensitivity to special needs of international students:
Although research seems to indicate that contact with the campus international student relations office provides an effective bridge to U.S. culture and also engenders positive attitudes toward U.S. education, it is extremely important for the faculty, administration, and staff to be sensitive to the special needs and problems of international students.

Encourage students to tape-record lectures: Non-native English speaking students have a great deal of difficulty understanding lectures. This difficulty is magnified when they are attempting to take notes. By using a tape recorder they can concentrate on the lecture and then transcribe their tapes when they have time to playback, consult the dictionary, etc.

Provide a stimulating atmosphere for learning: Study habits and learning are definitely affected in a positive way by a stimulating atmosphere.

Provide meaningful practical experiences: Remember what Piaget said about practical experience being an "engine of conceptual development".

Use advance organizers: Advance organizers are the primary means of strengthening cognitive structure and enhancing retention of new information. They are designed to increase the efficiency of information-processing capacities to absorb and relate bodies of knowledge. Advance organizers are the introductory material presented ahead of the learning task and at a higher level of abstraction and inclusiveness than the learning task itself. The purpose of advance organizers is to integrate and interrelate the material in the learning task with previously learned material. Provide these organizing principles, concepts, and terms that are already familiar to the student and provide them both verbally and visually. You will notice improvement in your students' information-processing ability.

Assist those who have failed: In cases of academic failure, assess the causes, try to find learning problems and alternative courses of action. The problems of the international student may be different from what appears on the surface.

Using constructive criticism: Many students from cultures in Asia, Mideast, and the Pacific do not understand the nature of constructive criticism or for that matter, any type of criticism. They make distinct divisions between friends and critics. Friends do not criticize, at least not where others can hear. Therefore, they can be deeply hurt when someone they consider a friend criticizes their contribution in the classroom or seminar situation.

Use of negative questions: when "yes" means "no": The use of negative statements and questions can cause considerable confusion in communicating with international students. In many languages the answer to a negative question is in the affirmative. For example, "you are not going to graduate in June, are you?" would be answered in the affirmative with "yes"; to mean yes, I am not going to graduate in June. A "no" response would mean no, I am going to graduate in June.

Personal Traits Needed in Working with International Students

Patience
Respect for Others
Tolerance for Ambiguity
Sociability
Kindness
Interest in Cultural differences

When we are preparing students and faculty for extended stays in another country, we try to provide them with suggestions of personal attributes which will help them adjust to life in a culture different from their own. Some of these personal factors which seem to be important to successful intercultural adjustment also seem to be important attributes in successfully working with international students. These attributes include:

Open-mindedness: The ability to keep one's opinions flexible and receptive to new stimuli.

Sense of Humor: A sense of humor is important because when working with students from another culture there are many things that lead one to weep, get angry, be annoyed or embarrassed or discouraged. A sense of humor will help guard against despair.

Ability to Cope with Failure: The ability to tolerate failure is critical because everyone overseas fails at something. Persons who go overseas are often those who have been the most successful in their home environments and have rarely experienced failure. When they are faced with a failure, they may find they have never developed ways of coping with it.

Ability to Communicate: The ability and willingness to communicate one's feelings and thoughts to others, verbally and nonverbally, is considered an important skill for successful intercultural communicators.

Flexibility and Adaptability: The ability to respond to and tolerate ambiguity, to keep options open and judgemental behavior to a minimum is very important to intercultural success.

Curiosity: In this case, "it does not kill the cat". A demonstrated desire to know about other people, places, ideas, etc. is helpful in a new cultural environment. You will discover that many international students ask personal and sometimes disconcerting curiosity-based questions.

Positive and Realistic Expectations: It has been shown frequently that there are strong correlations between positive expectations and successful outcomes.

Tolerance for Differences and Ambiguities: A sympathy with or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from one's own is an important component of intercultural relationships.

Positive Regard for Others: The ability to express warmth, empathy, respect, and positive regard for other persons is very important for effective intercultural relations.

A Strong Sense of Self: A clear, secure feeling about oneself usually yields individuals who are neither weak nor overbearing in their relations with others. Persons with a strong sense of themselves stand up for what they believe but do not need to cling to those beliefs regardless of new information, perspectives, or understandings which they may encounter.

Student Development

Across the United States, many college and university student services divisions are adopting the student development philosophy. Western's Student Services Division is pursuing this philosophy. The theoretical base for this development theory was derived from the psycho-social theories, cognitive theories, and theories of person/environment interaction prevalent in United States higher education today. These theories must be pervasive in all areas of encounter with the student client. "The underlying personal agenda for each staff member when in individual contact with a student should be the thought 'How can I make this interaction one which enhances the student's growth in some way?'."
(Student Services Mission Statement, Western Oregon State College)

Theories on which the student development approach are based are products of United States cultural assumptions that do not apply to large numbers of international students. Student development theories place a high value on individual autonomy and the achievement of self reliance. Americans assume that these are valuable traits, however, many international students have been taught that maturity entails considerable concern for the well-being of others and for intergroup harmony rather than individual autonomy and self reliance. In other words, much about the theories of student development are counter-cultural to many international students.

Gifts or Bribes?

I have received many calls from faculty concerning international students and gift-giving . Gift giving seems to cause faculty a great deal of concern. In many countries, especially in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa, it is customary to give gifts for assistance given or favors received, or for assistance that you hope will be given or favors you hope will be granted. In the eyes of many of us in the United States there is a "fine line" between these types of gifts and out-and-out bribery.

In most countries around the world giving gifts to someone for assistance they have provided or favors they have been granted is cutomary, and is certainly practiced in the United States as well. For example, there is an Arab saying, "Please don't be grateful, you will repay me." This means that he expects a favor in return for the favor he does for you, and he expects to be able to repay you when you do a favor for him. In many countries, however, it is not only customary but essential to offer *baksheesh* in order to receive assistance or favors. It appears that business, government, and education would almost cease to function without this form of tip or gratuity. Certainly it would be next to impossible for the individual to gain assistance or favors in the countries where this is practiced if they did not participate in this custom.

Many of our international students at Western come from a tradition of offering a gratuity in order to receive services, assistance, or favors. Almost all come from a tradition of providing gifts in appreciation for services, assistance, or favors they have received.

I am not suggesting that Western's professors turn to a *baksheesh* system, only that faculty keep in mind these traditions from which most of the international students come, and use their own value system in making decisions concerning the acceptance of gifts and invitations to dinner or entertainment.

Academic Problems

The international student is accepted into a U.S. college or university and is expected to have essentially the same type and amount of knowledge as newly admitted American students. It comes as quite a shock to some professors to discover that this is not true. To the international student this realization can be devastating. Many international students, who were high achievers in their home country schools, become extremely frustrated when they find they are academically "lacking" (often because of English language deficiencies) when compared with their American counterpart.

Perceptual pre-dispositions are important in determining how the international student's academic problems are perceived by his/her professors. The professor may react in various ways depending on whether he or she thinks the problems with the student's work is caused by underprivileged background, laziness, lack of intellectual ability, or playboyish behavior.

The difficulties faced by international students in the United States can be staggering. All international students suffer some degree of culture shock. The symptoms of culture shock can be homesickness, frustration and even hostility to their host institution, criticism of people, customs, services, and bureaucracy, and isolation. These symptoms can cause psychological barriers which delay learning and the improvement of English language skills (Dalili, 1982).

Some of the most severe academic problems encountered by international students include communicating their thoughts in English, improving their English to the level necessary to do well academically, completing written exams in the same length of time as American students, presenting oral reports, taking notes, and writing reports. In other words, most of their academic problems are directly related to a lack of proficiency with the English language and to differences between the educational systems of the United States and their home countries.

In general, age is a significant factor in academic problems. Younger students seem to have a higher incidence of academic problems than older students, while older students tend to have fewer academic, social and personal problems. Perhaps older students are more mature, ambitious, and motivated than younger students. Married students have fewer academic, social, and personal problems than single students and graduate students have fewer academic problems than undergraduate students.

Payind (1979) found that students who majored in social sciences and humanities had significantly more academic problems than those majoring in sciences and engineering. This might be attributed to the relatively higher proficiency in English required to do research in humanities and social sciences. Terminology and formulae in sciences and mathematics seem to be fairly common in every language and in every country.

Despite the plethora of problems-academic, social, and personal experienced by international students, they generally perform academically as well or better than their U.S. counterparts and have a very high success rate in achieving their educational goals. There are international students on the Honor Roll, placed on probation and academic suspension, and earning average or above average grades, just as we find American students performing. A variable contributing to academic success among international students seems to be that they bring with them natural inquisitiveness and self-motivation.

Althen (1981) reported that according to Forgus and Melamed international students may be the "sharpeners" rather than the "levelers" of their societies. "The 'sharpeners' are more differentiated in their thinking, more articulate, seek adventure and expose themselves to the unknown". "Levelers" tend to be more security oriented, seek the familiar, avoid the unknown, and tend to be more closed-minded. "Sharpeners" are also more adaptable to new situations and more creative. The distinction between "sharpeners" and "levelers" may help account for the differences in motivation in international students as they utilize various tactics to compensate for the handicaps of language, financial difficulties, culture shock, and differences in educational systems.

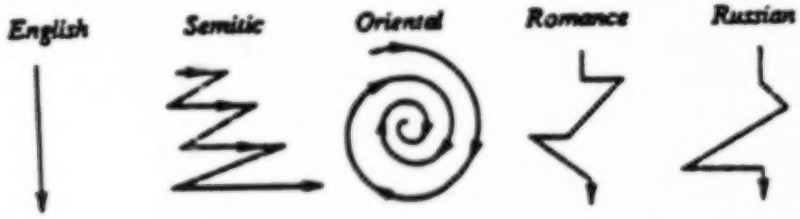
Another factor which may be beneficial in the academic success of international students is the rote system of education quite often

practiced in their home country. This habit of rote memorization may enable students to build a "network of cues" needed to retain information and retrieve it from memory.

Problem Areas for International Students in Writing English

Americans tend to be direct in their writing. They come to the point immediately and you find their topic sentence early in a paragraph. International students generally do not come to the point quickly because of cultural differences that do not place a high priority on coming to the point early.

This diagram from Robert B. Kaplan's Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education illustrates how cultural thought patterns might affect an international student's writing.



Americans have problems with the English language although they are native speakers. Most international students, as second language English speakers, have some unique difficulties with English. This section of the handbook is focused on the writing problems that seem to be particularly characteristic of second language English speaking students.

Many international students have problems choosing the correct article, "a", "an", or "the". Nouns in English are definite/indefinite, singular/plural, countable/non-countable, which determine the use of the proper article. Many languages do not have articles; the nouns do not require these determiners in front of them for the sentence to make sense. Therefore, many international students select the wrong article or leave them out altogether.

Tense is a problem for many international students. The English language uses a variety of verb forms to reflect time. Many languages indicate differences in time in other ways. Chinese and Arabic use the same verb for all tenses. Chinese indicates time with an adverb and in Arabic the imperfect can be used for present, past, and future.

Most international students have problems with subject-verb agreement, noun-pronoun agreement, first person singular "s", in fact, plurals of any kind, and omission of prepositions.

The mechanics of written English- spelling, capitalization, and punctuation, can be a problem for many international students. Many tend to write clause after clause without the benefit of punctuation, but generally have the same kind of punctuation problems that American students have, despite the fact that many foreign languages use very little punctuation. In Arabic there is no need for any internal or external punctuation. The use of capitalization in some languages is different from English. In Arabic for example there is no need for capitalization. Correct spelling for international students as well as Americans is the result of inate ability, proper training, and caring (Leman, 1981). Many international students, however, have added problems with spelling, brought about by interference from their native language.

Poor handwriting is found among international students just as it is among American students. Keep in mind that many international students must overcome the inherant problems of the change from a different alphabet or ideograms, or a different writing structure (right to left, top to bottom-right to left).

Japanese Language Roadblocks to Using English:

Although Japanese students have had at least six years of junior high/high school English language instruction before they enter college, there is frequently confusion with English that arises from the differences in the linguistic foundations of the two languages.

There is no resemblance in the word order of English and Japanese. There are, however, some "mirror images" in Japanese and English. For example, in English the direct object of a sentence follows the verb that controls it, while in Japanese the direct object precedes its verb.

In English the response to a question is made to the truth of the question. In Japanese the response is made according to the positive or negative element of the verb in the main clause.

Japanese has no determiners for the articles-a, an. the, but there are demonstratives which translate into "this", "that" (near the speaker), "that" (far from the speaker), and "what". The form of these demonstratives changes to cover pronouns, adjectives, and place. The use of these demonstratives and articles becomes very confusing for Japanese.

Pronouns form a part of the Japanese language, however, they are not used very often and usually only for emphasis. Japanese does not always require a head noun. Nouns and pronouns are frequently omitted in the subject position. We, therefore, can find English sentences written by Japanese such as: "Came to dance" or "Went to city".

The Japanese language has no plurals. A counter word is used for more than one of anything, but the noun does not change. The Japanese have problems with words where the noun changes for the plural such as "man-men" and "foot-feet". There is also confusion with plural "s" or "es" in English.

There may be trouble with English perfect tenses, passives, and causatives since English uses more than one word to make these constructions. The Japanese language is structured around inflected verbs.

There is a great deal of confusion between the sounds of the letter "l" and "r" for the Japanese student. They do not seem to discriminate between the two sounds, especially with words that begin with "l".

Chinese Language Roadblocks to Using English:

Chinese has a polysyllabic spoken language, but is recorded in monosyllabic characters. This gives you an idea how different Chinese is from English.

In Chinese, the singular and plural of a noun are indicated by "specifiers" which indicate the number of people or things meant. There is no change in the noun itself-no "s" added and no changes like "man-men". Therefore, it is not unusual for the Chinese student to write or say things in English like, "I have two pear" instead of two pears.

Chinese mix up English pronouns like "she" and "he" when writing or speaking English because in spoken Chinese the pronouns "he" and "she" are pronounced the same. The "th" sound in English is difficult for the Chinese because there is no similar sound in Chinese.

Chinese verbs are not inflected; one verb is sufficient, regardless of number, person, or tense. In Chinese, tense is indicated by time words or a prefix which may be in front of the verb, or at the beginning of the sentence. Thus, Americans would say, "I went to the store yesterday," while Chinese might say in English, "Yesterday, I go to store."

Portions of this chapter were taken from Nancy F. Leman, et al. "The Foreign Student Among Us", (A manual for OSU staff who work with foreign student writing).

POSTSCRIPT

International students are intelligent, resourceful, and highly motivated. If this were not true they would never have survived the transition to a new culture and a different language. Grades are extremely important to most international students. Many have been sent on scholarship by their governments or by other agencies on the condition that they perform well in their studies. Others are financed by their family or friends and the students do not wish them to suffer the shame and embarrassment that would accompany poor grades or failure. Most international students in the United States have been high-achievers in their home country. Because of English language difficulties, cultural shock, and other transition difficulties, they often fall behind academically. They are shocked when they are not given the recognition for achievement they have received on their home campuses.

Try to avoid stereotyping, treat each international student as an individual with a unique cultural background, interests, aptitude, and education. Working with international students can become very frustrating at times, but the rewards far outweigh the frustrations.

If you have an international student who is having problems and you wish help with them, contact the International Student Relations personnel for assistance or refer them to the Tutoring and Study Skills Center. Be sure to inform TASSC that the student has been referred.

A logical follow-up to this handbook is underway, A Handbook for International Students. This handbook will be a useful supplement to Western's Student Handbook and will hopefully serve the needs of international students-a growing population at Western Oregon State College.

1. Importance of time at the U.S. college

   * What is "early", "on-time", and "late" in the U.S.?
   * Personal responsibility for time
   * Keeping appointments
   * Coming to and leaving class
   * Submitting written assignments
   * Taking tests

2. Importance of contacting the professor or T.A.S.S.C. early if you have problems or questions

   * Student responsibility to initiate
   * Course requirements and expectations understood
   * Professor's policy regarding use of dictionary

3. Behavior in the U.S. college classroom

   * Talking, drinking, eating, smoking, leaving early
   * Class participation, asking questions
   * Group projects

4. Differences in student/faculty roles

   * Professor role in U.S. college
   * Informality in classroom
   * Gift-giving

5. U.S. view concerning copying, cheating, plagiarism

   * Written and oral assignments
   * Exams
   * Citing references

6. Transition problems (cultural shock)

   * Symptoms
   * Suggested remedies

7. Examinations and grading

   * Purpose
   * How to prepare for different types of exams
   * How to determine what to study
   * How the grades are derived
   * Course requirements and grades are non-negotiable

8. Differences in sex roles

9. Practical law for the international student

   * Driving and automobile related laws
   * Renting a house or apartment
   * Consumer protection
   * Check writing
   * Crimes
   * Small Claims Court
   * Attorneys

10. International Student Organization

11. Frequently used facilities

   * banks, grocers, pharmacies
   * churches, temples, and mosques
   * doctors, dentists, hospitals
   * Immigration & Naturalization Service
   * Social Security Office
   * Department of Motor Vehicles (driver's license, title, etc.)
   * Telephone, telegraph, cable, telex
   * International Student Relations Office

12. Immigration & Naturalization Service regulations

13. Things to do

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